

Team Dynamics Pave the Road to Safety Success

This month's safety topic:

Workplace Dynamics

Over the years workplace safety has improved because of the development of a variety of regulations, rules, standards and guidelines. These have all come together to create effective safety management systems which promote continual improvement in safety performance. These legislative and process advances have given supervisors and workers the tools they need to identify and control risk and prevent or reduce workplace related injuries and fatalities.

While these rules and procedures are all good, their effectiveness tends to diminish over time. That is why another important ingredient to safety is workplace dynamics. Workplace dynamics is defined as the way people interact with and treat each other. Things that influence the workplace dynamic include management style, employer expectations and the interactions between workers. Workplace dynamics will differ from company to company and is influenced by the specific corporate or organizational culture. Human dynamics within an organization can play more of a role in determining the success or failure of an occupational health and safety program than all the other things an organization does.

Dr. E. Scott Geller, a noted authority on safety and human dynamics says that you cannot improve your organization's safety performance without addressing human behaviour and workplace attitude. He has studied the importance of behaviour based safety in determining safety outcomes in an organization and has concluded that when people are put in control of a process that visibly contributes to preventing themselves and others from getting hurt, they feel responsible. They go beyond the call of duty to make the process work. Working together this way boosts morale, trust, belonging and optimism. When individuals share responsibility for safety they feel they are benefiting and so does the organization.

It is, therefore, a good idea to once and a while step back from the statistics and the procedures and see if you have the workplace dynamic that recognizes and rewards individual behaviour and attitudes.

Rob Weston
Executive Director



QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

Cooperation is the thorough conviction that nobody can get there unless everybody gets there.
~Virginia Burden

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The Supervisor's Role

in creating positive and effective workplace dynamics

By Tal Sperling

Workplace dynamics are most often defined by the interactions of workers and their supervisors, which is the same relationship that has the largest effect on workplace safety due to the impact of supervisors' instructions, mentoring and safety procedure enforcement. Therefore, if a supervisor does not have the appropriate skills to efficiently manage others, does not command the respect of their subordinates or is not aware of their responsibilities as a supervisor, workplace interpersonal relationships may suffer and may ultimately cause risks to the health and safety of all workers.

The key skills that the supervisor must possess in order to ensure that there are positive workplace dynamics include effective communication, being able to recognize and resolve personal and workplace conflicts between others, and effective leadership based on mutual respect, trust and the ability to motivate and support their team members. This is no small order and often supervisors are promoted to their roles without being aware of the need for these skills or being provided the training to learn and develop them. A recently published resource guide is now avail-

able online which can assist with both identifying the necessary supervisory skills and appropriate training courses for such skill development (http://www.hrwire.ca/employer_resources/training_and_education/supervisory_skill/).

It is important to realize that workers will be more receptive to safety or any other training information, work procedures or management requirements if they feel

respected and valued and if they have confidence in their supervisor's ability to lead, resolve complicated workplace issues and listen receptively to worker concerns and ideas. Since workplace dynamics affect so much of the work environment, productivity, worker engagement and the bottom line, it is vital to invest in selecting the right people for the job and that includes developing the right skills in your supervisors.



As a manager/supervisor you can facilitate and support a culture of a healthy workplace dynamics through the following actions:

MODEL AND PROMOTE DESIRED WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS

Model, demonstrate and show commitment to desired behaviours and encourage shared conflict responsibility.

LISTEN ACTIVELY

Good communication is an essential ingredient to leading and building a better understanding with your staff and establishing trust. It is critical to demonstrate a willingness to listen and understand issues and concerns raised by staff.

DISCUSS TRAINING NEEDS

Encourage reflection on strengths and difficulties experienced when working in the team. Identify training or team-building activities that will have benefits for the whole team.

ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS

Provide clear guidelines to staff about how conflict is to be managed in the workplace.

DEVELOP STRONG PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

People management skills such as motivating staff, sharing information, providing constructive feedback, coaching, and setting clear expectations around roles and responsibilities play a major role in preventing unhealthy conflict.

SEEK OUT ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WHEN NECESSARY

There may be occasions when due to the nature or complexity of conflict more specialised support or intervention will be required.

Dealing Effectively with an Aging Workforce

By Leasa Hachey

In the coming years, younger workers will account for a less likely source of new employees, making the retention of older workers an important human resource strategy. By the year 2026 one in five Canadians will be 65 years of age or older — up from one in eight in 2001. Canada's birth rate has also been falling rapidly. This combination is expected to have a profound effect on the Canadian labour market. Over the next ten years, the number of Canadian workers aged 55 to 64 will increase by more than 50% and, by the year 2015, they will make up a total of 48% of the labour force. This means employers will need to keep older workers employed past the traditional retirement age.

There are many safety and social stereotypes about older workers that are based on the perception that older workers are frail and inflexible in their habits. The chart at the bottom of the page published by the Government of Alberta puts many of these myths to rest.

The reality is that hiring and retaining older workers has many advantages. Some examples:

- strong work ethic and reliability
- sense of responsibility and duty to the job
- cooperative and team-oriented attitude
- willingness to work flexible schedules
- life and work experience
- lower absenteeism
- ability to be a role model or mentor

Sometimes the physical and mental changes related to aging can affect an older worker's performance. By making some adjustments to equipment and workplace environment, the employer can ensure that older workers can do their job effectively and safely. These kinds of adjustments will often benefit workers of all ages.

Some ideas for adjustments are:

- Provide mechanical and powered devices for lifting and moving.
- Provide grip-friendly tools and long handled tools to reduce bending.
- Reduce climbing and prevent working from heights.
- Brightly mark steps, floors and surfaces.
- Limit above-shoulder and above-head work.
- Encourage stretch breaks.
- Adjust work or hours in high or low temperatures.
- Schedule work accordingly to avoid fatigue.
- Ensure written material is large enough to be easily read and in easy-to-read colour combinations.
- Encourage regular eye exams.
- Reduce multi-tasking.
- Reinforce tasks and skills through repetition, drills and refresher courses.

Get real-time trucking and safety news!

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Myths and Realities about Older Workers

MYTH:

REALITY:

Older workers are more likely to have work-related injuries.

Not true. In fact, older workers suffer fewer job-related injuries.

Older adults are unable or unwilling to learn new things or skills.

Age does not determine curiosity or the willingness to learn. Older workers may sometimes take slightly longer to learn certain tasks and may respond better to training methods more suited to their needs.

Older workers have failing memories.

Long-term memory continues to increase with age.

Older workers are inflexible.

Older workers may be more cautious, a trait that can improve accuracy and safety.

Older adults have impaired mental or intellectual capacity.

Studies show intellectual abilities stay intact well into the 70s and beyond. Age tends to enhance the ability to perform activities depending on judgement, decision-making and general knowledge.

Older workers are more likely to suffer from illness and are more often absent or late for work than younger workers.

Most studies show older workers have lower absenteeism and tend to be more punctual than younger workers. Usually, older workers with health conditions requiring extensive sick leave have left the workforce on their own accord. Any significant increase in hospital stays or sick leave are not likely to show up until people are over 80.

Free Safety Resources for Your Workplace

The TSCBC is pleased to offer resources to help promote safety in the workplace.

Decals

We have created a set of decals that can be applied to a truck cab, trailer or forklift as a visual reminder to enter and exit the vehicle safely. These decals send a targeted and effective message and make safety and compliance the building blocks of your success. Email us today at info@safetydriven.ca with your shipping address and how many you require and we will send them to you. They are also available for pickup from our office.



Posters

We now have a selection of four OHS-themed posters available for download from our website (safetydriven.ca/trucking-safety-resources), with more to come in the future. Printed versions (11" x 17") are also available for pickup from our office. Feel free to let us know if there is a particular workplace safety theme you'd like to see in a future poster.

Driving
drowsy
is just as dangerous as
Driving
drunk

Pull over and rest if you are tired. Nap, walk or have a snack to revive your senses and keep yourself and others out of danger.

Stop. Revive. Survive.



A message from
TSCBC
TRUCKING SAFETY
COUNCIL OF BC
safetydriven.ca



Fatigue is more
then just feeling tired

Prevent fatigue by finding the cause.



A message from
TSCBC
TRUCKING SAFETY
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safetydriven.ca

Don't let your footwear give you the **SLIP**



A 54-year-old truck driver was heading home at the end of another rainy day. He was wearing his running shoes, and as he stepped from the cab his left foot slipped on the wet step. His right leg was still in the cab and his legs did the splits, tearing the hamstring on his right leg. That pair of running shoes cost him and his company 15 days of work and a workers' compensation claim of almost \$3,000. The indirect costs of replacement workers, idle trucks and investigation and paperwork were even higher.

- ▶ **Always wear sturdy shoes with good traction. Rainy or icy weather can make even the simplest task treacherous. Don't take the risk.**
- ▶ **Maintain 3 points-of-contact when entering or exiting the cab.**
- ▶ **Always look on the ground below for any debris, curbs or ice before exiting the cab.**

Tips for truckers



The Cold War is back. Learn how to drive safely in winter conditions.

Winter can be a dangerous time to be on roadways, whether you are a new or seasoned driver. To help you prepare and stay safe, here are some tips:

- 1. Watch for black ice.** Black ice is a thin layer of transparent ice that forms when the temperature is close to freezing. Look for ice build up on your windshield; this is a clue that conditions are favourable for black ice to develop. Slow down when approaching shaded areas, bridges and overpasses as these sections of road freeze sooner than others in cold weather.
- 2. Carry a cell phone and make sure it is charged.** Cell phone batteries can freeze in extremely cold weather, so don't leave your phone in the vehicle for extended periods of time.
- 3. Drop your speed to match road conditions.** No matter how much experience you have, the way your truck will move on snow or ice is unpredictable.
- 4. Talk to people.** Make sure your radio is on and talk to the drivers around you. We're all a little nervous out there and it helps to know what you're dealing with. Try to find a seasoned driver with a healthy respect for physics to help talk you through it.
- 5. Don't follow too close.** Traffic tends to bunch up on bad roads – the natural inclination is to follow other drivers. Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you.
- 6. Watch for warning signs.** If vehicles are spun out in the median or shoulder, the roads are bad. If you start seeing big trucks spun out, it's time to get off the roadway.
- 7. There is no load worth your life.** If you are on a dangerous roadway, try to find a safe spot to wait it out. Let your logbook gain some hours. If you can't find a spot in a truck stop, park on a ramp or anywhere that is safe and out of the way. Try not to park on an incline, as you may get stuck.
- 8. Make sure you have the supplies you need.** In the unfortunate event that you end up stuck, spun out, wrecked or just sitting in a back up, be sure you have the necessities with you. Keep extra warm clothing, blankets, canned food and water. Be sure to keep your diesel tanks full so you won't run out.
- 9. Treat your diesel.** Diesel gels when it gets really cold. If your diesel gels, your truck won't run. If you are facing winter weather conditions you need to put an anti-gel additive to your tanks (put it in BEFORE you fuel so that it mixes). It is a good idea to stock up ahead of time.
- 10. Commercial vehicles in B.C. must carry chains from October 1 to April 30.** Make sure your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before you need to use them. Otherwise, you may have a cold and frustrating experience on the side of the road. Stop at a weigh station or rest area for the install so you are safely off the road and have some room to drive your rig forward and back.
- 11. Wear sturdy shoes or boots that have good traction.** Snow, ice and cold weather can make even the simplest task treacherous. Maintaining 3 points of contact when entering or exiting the cab will keep you on your feet, especially in winter when steps and the ground below may be icy.

**Keep winter under surveillance.
Don't know? Don't go.**

**ShiftIntoWinter.ca
DriveBC.ca**



THE OCCUPATIONAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP



Protecting Each Other – Safety Beyond Regulations

By Andrew Chan

Both the Canada Labour Code and Workers' Compensation Act require employees to take care of their own health and safety and to take all reasonable and necessary precautions to ensure safety of other employees and persons likely to be affected by their acts or omissions.

Many successful companies and work teams have gone beyond the expectation of this legal requirement. They have embraced working together and believe that looking out for each other's health and safety is the formula to ensure safety and success of the company. In review of their workplace dynamics you would likely find some of the following characteristics:

- **Appreciation of genuine effort by team members to provide suggestions or reminders such as "Joe, put on your face mask, it is dusty here".**
- **Open and rigorous communication processes to address OHS expectations and operational safety issues such as employee participation in reporting hazards and near misses.**
- **Safety is practiced as part of the expected behaviour of doing a job. For instance, doing a circle check of the truck and adjusting the driver's seat is part of the task of delivering a load.**
- **Safety is acted upon as an individual responsibility such as never walking by a hazard without addressing it.**



Every organization will have its unique workplace dynamics expressed through the way the employees communicate and interact. You may build your own workplace dynamics checklist to assess the dynamics among employees. Your periodic assessments will help you to identify potential barriers and improvement measures needed. Here are a few items to help you get started and you can add more checklist items of your own.

Observations	YES	NO
"Safety" is part of the language of the company.		
Safety is part of your ongoing communication processes.		
Safety is integrated in everyone's work activities.		
Safety concerns are evident in the interaction among staff and in their interaction with members of the public.		
Safety hazards and near misses are recognized and reported.		

Save Money, Get COR!

Visit our website for more information
safetydriven.ca/cor

COR is an initiative that recognizes and rewards employers who develop and apply sustainable occupational health and safety programs that meet or exceed the applicable legal requirements and health and safety regulations.

Following verification by a TSCBC audit, companies will receive up to a **15% rebate** on their WorkSafeBC premiums in each year they qualify.

UPCOMING COR TRAINING

Senior Management/ Owner	March 27 1pm - 4:30pm
Health & Safety Management	March 28 & 29 9am - 4:30pm
Return to Work	March 30 9am - 4:30pm

Have you visited our website yet?

To learn more about the Council and our programs, visit our website:

www.safetydriven.ca

We are constantly adding information and resources to the Trucking Safety Council website. Please check back often to see what new and interesting content we have added!



Interactive Hazard Identification

The best thing you can do to prevent injuries on the job is to stay alert and look out for hazards that could cause injuries. Sometimes this can be hard to do, especially if you are used to doing a certain job and everything you see in your work environment becomes second nature. This tool is meant to remind you that every day there are hazards that need to be avoided or fixed. Have a look at the workplace pictures and try to see if you can find all of the hazards.

<http://safetydriven.ca/trucking-injury-prevention>

Safety Alerts and Bulletins

These WorkSafeBC posters provide important safety messages for you and your workers. At the time each poster was originally produced, it reflected the current WorkSafeBC requirements. In all cases, today's OHS Regulation and requirements must be applied to the situation shown in each poster.

<http://safetydriven.ca/safety-alerts-bulletins>

Forms and Templates

Various forms and templates are provided to assist companies with the implementation of safety policies and procedures and in meeting regulatory requirements and TSCBC Certificate of Recognition audit standards. The templates are generic in nature and should be reviewed and modified to ensure they address the specific operating conditions and risks of the company. More are added weekly.

<http://safetydriven.ca/trucking-safety-forms-templates>

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Next month's safety topic...
Communicating Safety